

17 Simple Ways to Stay Connected When You Are A Remote Team Leader



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1. Greet people every morning or at the start of *their* workday, if different than your own. Use a brief email or IM; consider including a GIFF or photo attachment.
2. Set up and hold a recurring virtual coffee break. Send mugs to everyone to start the tradition.
3. Send a periodic "team in a box": something that everyone receives for being part of your team. An example is an inspirational quote in a small frame that can be changed out periodically based on what is going on in your department.
4. Be ruthless and rigorous in your transparency about scheduling; go beyond access to a shared calendar: set up a group norm about how and when to share schedules (i.e., email at end of day about next day), etc.
5. Keep a connection checklist: a table that contains a list of all your team members and columns to fill in with date of last contact. Put a date each time you've connected live—the goal is to not let more than a day go by without a connection (holidays and vacations being the exception).
6. Hold virtual celebrations for events such a birthdays and work anniversaries.
7. Set up a team workspace (Microsoft Teams, Slack, etc.) and populate it routinely.
8. Use video every chance you get and as much as you can.
9. Schedule a full hour for one-on-ones each week with team members and be very reluctant to cancel them.
10. Balance schedule inconvenience; take your turn for early mornings or late evenings.
11. Get together face-to-face at least once a year. When together, take a group photo and ensure everyone has a physical copy before leaving.
12. Look for opportunities to get team input to decisions and idea generation. Create a group document for brainstorming and idea mapping.
13. Announce news often—don't wait for it to be a big event to share day-to-day information. Think about it as if you were sitting next to one another and share tid bits throughout the day.
14. Dial into meetings early to have time to chat; allot the five minutes leading into a meeting as 'social' time.
15. Let people know of any delays in responses; a quick email to acknowledge, "Got it and will respond ASAP" is helpful to keeping connections.
16. Run a group challenge (such as number of steps in a day) to create sense of community.
17. Mail hard copy notes for special (and not-so-special) occasions. These birthday and thank you cards become visual reminders of you and the team.